



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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North Central Board Meeting Wednesday, June 28, 2023 – 9:30 AM

Members – via Teams

Ann Losey	Cameron County
Cliff Clark	Cameron County
Jodi Brennan	Clearfield County
Kristy Smith	Clearfield County
Matt Quesenberry	Elk County
Tracy Gerber	Elk County
Jeff Pisarcik	Jefferson County
Scott North	Jefferson County
Jessica Funk	Jefferson County
Jim Sleigh	Jefferson County
Carol Duffy	McKean County
Susan Zook-Wilson	McKean County
Nancy Grupp	Potter County
Jill Martin-Rend	At-Large BC3@Brockway
Carolyn Newhouse	At-Large Bradford Alliance

Staff - via Teams

Jim Chorney
Amy Kessler
Ed Matts
Shelly Caggiano
Chris Perneski
Jenn Hibbard
Mary Lou Jessop

Guests

Brian Stockman Ridgway Record

Chair Ann Losey called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM with the pledge to the flag.

QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call was taken and there was a quorum for the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Purchases

There was one purchase requesting permission to renew the Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI) Software Non-profit Annual Maintenance Agreement for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. This is software for the GIS Department. The cost is \$10,500 and money has been allocated for this.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve renewing the Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI) Software Non-profit Annual Maintenance Agreement for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, at the cost of \$10,500.

Nancy Grupp moved to approve the motion to approve renewing the Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI) Software Non-profit Annual Maintenance Agreement for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, at the cost of \$10,500, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. Motion unanimously passed.

Tax Assessment

The appeal for the reassessment was filed through Solicitor Beveridge's office within the 20 days as required. Jim had conversations with Commissioner Quesenberry and the Elk County Assessment Office about other options that are available to us. One recommendation was to look into filing for the exemption for the organization besides looking at just the appeal process. Jim went down and got the Assessment Packet, and it appears we should be able to fill this out internally without too many questions for our solicitor. Once this package is submitted to the Assessment Office the county's legal counsel then reviews it. It typically takes one – two weeks or a little more if there are any questions regarding it. We can go ahead and start filing that if the Board would like.

The appeal to the increased assessment will not happen until the fall. We can actually file this right now and then still decide whether we want to do that fall appeal process or not. This was information Jim received at the end of last week.

If the Board agrees Jim can start working on filling out the Property Tax Exemption form packet that the County of Elk has and submit that for consideration. Jim said we can make a formal motion to have him file the Tax Exemption Packet with the Assessment Office. At the last meeting we approved the appeal as a motion so this could be to allow Jim to file the Tax Exemption with the Elk County Assessment Office.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the completing of the forms for the tax appeal.

Carolyn Newhouse moved to approve the completing of the forms for the tax appeal, seconded by Carol Duffy. Motion unanimously passed.

Building Committee Update

Jim updated the Board on what has transpired since our May Board meeting. We received a portion of the bid package and are waiting for the rest of it from the engineer. This will be tabled until the July meeting.

Loans

Jenn presented the following loans for Board approval.

North American Tool and Machine, Inc., Emporium, Cameron County, has requested a loan in the amount of \$ 175,000 from the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) for 10 years at 4% for business acquisition and purchase of equipment. Purchase equipment in the acquisition of North American Tooling, Inc. North Central's collateral will be shared 2nd lien security on all business assets; shared 2nd mortgage on commercial real estate located at 6920 Bennetts Valley Highway, DuBois, shared 3rd mortgage with Cameron County on real estate located at 2000 Gamelands Road, DuBois; assignment of life insurance, as well as the personal guarantee of the owner and spouse. Three full-time jobs will be retained, and one new full-time job and two new part-time jobs will be created within three years.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the loan to North American Tool and Machine, Inc.

An Losey moved to approve the loan to North American Tool and Machine, Inc., seconded by Carolyn Newhouse. Motion unanimously passed.

El Gorodo Burro LLC, DuBois, Clearfield County, has requested a loan in the amount of \$75,000 from the USDA/IRP 4 for 10 years at 4%, for building renovations and equipment. Building renovations and equipment purchases for new Mexican and Japanese Steakhouse restaurant. North Central's collateral will be 2nd mortgage on real estate located at 34 North Brady Street, DuBois; 1st lien security interest filing on all business assets, as well as the personal guarantees of the majority owners. Eight full-time jobs and seven part-time jobs will be created within three years.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the loan to El Gorodo Burro LLC.

Jeff Pisarcik moved to approve the loan to El Gorodo Burro LLC, seconded by Jodi Brennan. Motion unanimously passed.

Robert G. Cospers Jr. dba Cospers's Produce, Smethport, McKean County, has requested a loan in the amount of \$8,000 from the USDA RMAP Microloan for 5 years at 5%, for purchase of equipment. Purchase equipment to complete high-tunnel greenhouse/above ground irrigation system project for use in growing and supplying crops for the roadside produce stand. Design includes hydroponic growing beds, hanging basket-type of frames to be suspended from the roof truss systems and direct planting of crops in irrigated plant beds that will increase overall capacity and efficiency for growing crops. The project will result in extended sales season of the stand by six weeks as it is expected to gain approximately one planting zone in growing time. North Central's collateral will be UCC-1 filing on all business assets as well as the personal guarantees of owner and spouse. One full-time job and three part-time jobs will be retained.

A loan in the amount of \$8,500 from the SSBCI was approved at the May 2023 Board Meeting.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the loan to Robert G. Cospers Jr. dba Cospers's Produce.

Carol Duffy moved to approve the loan to Robert G. Cospers Jr. dba Cospers's Produce, seconded by Nancy Grupp. Motion unanimously passed.

DISCUSSION

Jim stated that we have been asked by the Pennsylvania Broadband Authority to co-host on community conversation' events. We have been asked to put together two events, one in Clearfield County and one in McKean/Potter Counties sometime before mid-July. We have been working to identify locations and times. What we have been able to come up with is on July 18 we will be doing an event at the DuBois Mall from 10 AM – 11:30 AM. On July 20 we are going to be doing an event in Port Allegany at the VFW from 10 AM – 11:30 AM.

These events are going to be a 90-minute conversation from more than likely their consultant, who is Michael Baker, or the PA Broadband Authority will be talking to the residents about what their challenges and access to broadband are.

They will also be asking them to complete a survey, which they will have a paper form of the survey on site.

Matt asked Jim if he wanted to talk about the possibility of entertaining a payment in lieu of taxes, assuming if the tax exemption would be approved at the meeting.

What Matt is referring to is they have talked in the past about a payment in lieu of taxes where there is just a set amount paid. The Board could make a recommendation for a payment in lieu of taxes just by making an offer to the Elk County Commissioners.

When asked how to word this Matt said it would be to the county, but it also includes the school district and the borough, and he can't talk about them specifically.

All this came about is because we currently pay about \$21,000 in property taxes. However, with the increased number of building permits by Keystone Rural Health, this caused the reassessment of our building which, by our research, would increase by another \$10,000 annually. So we started exploring other options.

Jim added that we reached out to our auditing firm to ask them regarding the rental income that comes in from Keystone Rural Health because they are also a non-profit, does that quality for that portion of the property be exempt as well?

The answer was it depends on the wording in the lease agreement and if it's not worded specifically to address taxes, then there is a chance that their portion of the building, even though they are tax exempt, could still qualify as an assessed value that we could be taxed for.

Chair Losey asked if Matt was expecting the Board to make an offer today? To which Matt thought that was the purpose of the discussion to get the thoughts of the Board and move forward.

Chair Losey stated she would like to see what the taxes are going to be before we make a payment in lieu of taxes on something that is unknown to us at this time. We don't know what the taxes will be for Keystone Rural Health.

Jim stated there is the possibility we won't even qualify to be tax exempt, and it is Jim's understanding that when the solicitor makes that determination, it's final and everyone just accepts

the decision. If there is an extenuating circumstance like rent, he will make a determination on that as well.

Ann said she's not opposed to doing the payment in lieu of taxes but thinks we should wait until the dust settles so everyone knows what's what.

Matt said we will revisit this at the July meeting.

Jeff agreed we should wait until next month and see what more information will be forthcoming.

Jim said he will move forward with filing the paperwork for the exemption and hopefully we will have a decision close to or prior to the July meeting.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 26, starting at 9:30 and will be in-person and virtual.

ADJOURN

With no other business, Chair Losey called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Pisarcik moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jill Martin-Rend. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Padraic McGrath, CPA
Secretary/Treasurer